

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE

THE WARM SOUND

produced by the Vintage As is reminiscent of the calf-skin heads they were initially designed to emulate



REMO VINTAGE A HEADS



From £13.90 As Remo Vintage A heads revisit one of the company's first designs, nostalgia has never sounded so good, writes Adam Jones

Vintage A heads were launched last year to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the manufacture of the company's first synthetic heads. For 'launched' read 're-launched', as Vintage A's are replicas of Remo heads that were last available nearly half a century ago.

Build

Up until the late 1950s, drummers relied solely on calf heads which, although they brought a warm, thick sound to drums, were all too susceptible to changes in temperature and humidity. The technology that enabled the first synthetic heads to be made was thanks to advances made during the Second World War and the ensuing Space Race. The polyester film Mylar was created by DuPont and used in wartime reconnaissance flights and then by NASA (one of its legacies is the rolls of cling-film found in every kitchen). Mylar is durable, inexpensive and, most importantly, weather resistant. The first synthetic Remo heads were thus created. Mylar was then only available in two thicknesses - 7.5 mil and 3 mil (1 mil equating

to 1/1000th inch) - so the thicker variety was used for batter heads while the thinner sheets were ideal for the resonant side. The heads were christened Weather King - the name that still features on Remo heads - due to the fact that they were unaffected by climatic conditions. By 1959, with rock'n'roll in full swing, drummers were demanding louder and longer-lasting heads, so Remo combined the two thicknesses of Mylar together on the same head. This new head was named the Ambassador (while the original 7.5 mil single-film head became the Diplomat). It is this two-film Ambassador that Remo has resurrected in the form of the Vintage A.

Hands On

Ironically, the first Ambassadors didn't have a very long product life, as less than 18 months later Dupont introduced a 10 mil-thick version of Mylar which was used to make the Ambassador heads that are essentially unchanged today. Vintage A heads are suitable for snare and tom use and are available in 10", 12", 13", 14" and 16" sizes only. I tested them alongside the regular

Ambassadors fitted to my kit, and the results delighted me. They are not as crisp as Ambassadors but are wonderfully warm and resonant; in fact, very reminiscent of the calf heads that they were originally designed to emulate. Think of a typical '60s drum sound with the drums open and ringing, and you're about there. My only complaint is that Remo has no plans to introduce bass drum sizes.

Verdict

Gary Mann of Remo's UK operation is largely to thank for the reintroduction of Vintage A heads. He is owed a debt of gratitude, as these heads are not simply an exercise in nostalgia - Remo is so pleased with the results that it has decided to make Vintage A heads a permanent line. While there is no shortage of heads on the market, the Vintage A heads do offer something different. Somewhere between regular Ambassadors and Emperors but with an added twist, they are a graphic illustration of just how much influence a head has over the sound of a drum. **R**

Rating

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICES

10"	£13.90
12"	£14.80
13"	£15.50
14"	£16.50
16"	£18.10

HEAD

CONSTRUCTION
Two layers of Mylar film, one 7.5mil and one 3mil thick, bound to an aluminium flesh hoop. Top layer coated.

IN-BUILT DAMPENING
No

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